

Message Text

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISTANBUL 1292

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SUBJECT: STUDENT VIOLENCE AT ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY

REF: ISTANBUL 1210

SUMMARY: POLICE APRIL 24 USED STRONG METHODS TO REPRESS
MOST SERIOUS STUDENT VIOLENCE AT ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY IN
RECENT MONTHS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN MOST VIOLENT CLASHES SINE 1971 BETWEEN RIGHT/LEFT
STUDENT FACTIONS, POLICE EMPLOYED UNUSUALLY HARSH MEASURES
TO SUPPRESS DISTURBANCE AT ISTANBUL UNIV. (IU) APRIL 24.
TROUBLES BEGAN WITH CONFRONTATION BETWEEN LEFTISH GROUP
PLANNING BOYCOTT AT IU SCIENCE FACULTY AND "COMMANDOS"
FROM ADJACENT LITERATURE FACULTY. AFTER POLICE USED FORCE TO
BREAK UP CAMPUS MELEE, BATTLE SPREAD TO NEARBY STUDENT
YOUTH HOSTELS. DURING ATTACK ON LEFTISH HOSTEL, A JANITOR
WAS KILLED BY A STRAY BULLET, CAUSING STUDENT TO REFUSE ENTRY
TO POLICE ON GROUNDS THAT POLICE WERE SIDING WITH COMMANDOS.
POLICE FORCED ENTRY WITH TEAR GAS AND ARMORED "PANZER"

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RIOT VEHICLES, WHILE STUDENTS RESPONDED BY THROWING STONES

AND MOLOTOV COCKTAILS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, BY TIME DISTURBANCE QUELLED, ONE MAN HAD DIED, 23 WERE INJURED, AND 324 STUDENTS WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY, OF WHICH 180 HAD BEEN QUESTIONED AND RELEASED 24 HOURS LATER. THE UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN RECESSED UNTIL APRIL 28.

2. IN COURSE OF CONFRONTATIONS, WINDOWS OF OFFICES OF JUSTICE PARTY (JP) YOUTH BRANCH AND HEADQUARTERS OF THE CONSERVATIVE TURKISH NATIONAL STUDENT UNION (MTTB) WERE BROKEN, ALLEGEDLY BY LEFTWING STUDENTS. THE JP YOUTH BRANCE ISSUED STATEMENT CONDEMNING ACTS BY "COMMUNISTS" AND PLEDGED COUNTER MEASURES. AT SAME TIME LEFTIST STUDENTS AT TWO TECHNICAL SCHOOLS CALLED BOYCOTTS TO PROTEST INCIDENTS. SINCE NEWS PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE AMONG THOSE INJURED, ISTANBUL BRANCH OF TURKISH UNION OF JOURNALISTS ISSUED STATEMENT CRITICIZING BOTH POLICE AND STUDENTS. ISTANBUL GOVERNOR SENTURK IN A TELEVISION AND RADIO COMMUNIQUE APRIL 24, DEPLORED THE VIOLENCE AND PROMISED TO INVESTIGATE ITS CAUSES.

COMMENT: WHILE THE APRIL 24 INCIDENTS FOLLOWED FAMILIAR PATTERN OF "COMMANDOS" FIGHTING WITH LEFTISH STUDENTS ORGANIZING "FORUM DISCUSSIONS", THE FORCE EMPLOYED BY BOTH POLICE AND STUDENTS APPEARS TO BE NEW ELEMENT ON SCENE. IN PREVIOUS ENCOUNTERS POLICE HAVE SHOWN GREAT RESTRAINT TOWARD STUDENTS, SELDOM ACTUALLY ENGAGING THEM; WHILE STUDENTS HAVE AVOIDED PROVOCATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES. IN THE LATEST TROUBLES, HOWEVER, MUTUAL RESTRAINT SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED, GIVING WAY TO USE OF BRUTE FORCE BY EACH SIDE. IT IS TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS WAS SIMPLY AN INCIDENT THAT ESCALATED ACCIDENTALLY INTO VIOLENCE, OR WHETHER IT WAS THE RESULT OF A "GET TOUGH" POLICY ON THE PART OF THE DEMIRAL GOVT., COMBINED WITH A NEW MILITANCE OF THE STUDENT LEFT. HOWEVER, THE INTENSITY OF THE CLASHES TENDS TO CONFIRM IN PART WIDESPREAD EXPECTATIONS AMONG POLITICAL OBSERVERS HER OF INCREASING STUDENT OPPOSITION TO DEMIREL GOVT. ANDESCALATING LEVEL OF VIOLENCE. WILLIAMS

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